WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Gas Tragedy in the National Fertilizer Ltd., Panipat

*45. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA :
DR. BAPU KALDATE :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of persons were killed and many taken ill due to leakage of the deadly ammonia gas at the National Fertilizers Limited Plant at Panipat;

(b) whether Government have instituted any enquiry into the accident;

(c) if so, the findings thereof;

(d) whether any responsibility has been fixed; and if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the details of the compensation paid by Government to the victims and the action taken to avoid recurrence of such incidents in future ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI CHINTA MOHAN) : (a) Ten persons died in the Panipat Plant of the National Fertilisers Ltd. (NFL) on 26-8-1992 due to leakage of ammonia gas while repair work was being undertaken to change the safety valve of one of the ammonia feed pumps. Besides, eleven other persons also received injuries who have recovered after treatment.

(b) to (d) An enquiry committee headed by an outside expert was constituted by NFL to go into the causes of the accident, fixation of responsibility, if any, review of safety procedures followed in the unit and to recommend remedial measures. In its report, the enquiry committee has held that the accident was on account of failure of a component of a suction valve of Ammonia Pump. Since the personnel directly concerned, including the officer who had issued the safety permit authorising the work, also perished in the accident, the enquiry committee has observed that fixing of responsibility is not possible. The committee has suggested a number of short-term and long-term measures for avoiding such mishaps.

(e) M/s NFL, which is a public sector undertaking, has made *ex-gratia* payment of Rs. 25,000/- to the dependents of each deceased employee and Rs. 10,000/- each to the injured. The entire expenses on medical treatment of the injured amounting to Rs. 4.7 lakhs were also borne by NFL. In addition to the *ex-gratia* payment, the dependents of NFL employees and trainees received compensation under various benefit schemes of the company which ranged between Rs. 1.7 lakhs to Rs. 4.17 lakhs depending on the ranks and pay drawn. The families of contractor's employees who died in the accident were also paid compensation ranging between Rs. 1.08 lakhs to Rs. 1.13 lakhs per deceased. The total compensation paid by the company is Rs. 22.79 lakhs including *ex-gratia* payment. In addition, the company is also endeavouring to give employment to one of the dependents of the deceased persons.

The report of the enquiry committee has been accepted by the Board of NFL and a number of suggested measures have already been implemented by the company. The highlights of the enquiry report and of the remedial measures suggested in it are also being taken to the notice of other manufacturing units using similar equipment so that appropriate preventive action is taken.

Distribution of surplus land to the Landless

*46. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA:
DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether distribution of surplus land in the country has been very tardy;

(b) if so, the total area of land acquired by Government till now and distributed to the landless and agricultural labour, together with their number as on 31st October, 1992;

(c) the total area of land at present available for distribution;

(d) whether it is a fact that the Central Government had directed the State Governments to urgently distribute the surplus land;

(e) whether it is also a fact that Government have drawn up a plan to help the beneficiaries to become self-reliant if so, the details thereof; and

(f) by when the plan is likely to be implemented ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT) (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY) : (a) States have enacted ceiling legislations under which the ceiling area is prescribed and the vesting and distribution of ceiling surplus land are made. The progress made by some of the State need to be improved.

(b) Information has not been received from most of the States upto the 31st October, 1992. The related information upto the 30th June, 1992 is as follows :—

Total area of ceiling surplus land vested—72.81 lakh acres

Area taken possession—63.53 lakh acres
Area distributed to the landless and the agriculture labour—49.75 lakh acres

Total number of landless beneficiaries—47.59 lakh persons

(c) Total area of land available for distribution till 30th June, 1992.—88711 acres

(d) The State Governments have been advised to distribute the surplus land expenditiously.

(e) and (f) The basic objective of the distribution programme of the ceiling surplus land is to expand the productive base of the allottee. The Central Government, to augment the efforts of the States towards this goal, has been implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of financial assistance to the assignees of the ceiling surplus land @ Rs. 2500/- per hectare of the distributed land partly for making the land cultivable and partly to meet the consumption needs. The scheme has been under implementation since 1975-76. Till 1991-92 a sum of Rs. 57.71 crore has been released to the States as Central share under this Scheme.

सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के माध्यम से बेची जाने वाली वस्तुओं पर राज-सहायता में कमी

*47. श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज : क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह सच है कि सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के अंतर्गत चलने वाली उचित दर दुकानों से बेचे जाने वाले खाद्यान्नों पर राज-सहायता में हाल ही में कमी की गई है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो उसके क्या कारण हैं;

(ग) क्या यह भी सच है कि राज-सहायता में कमी किए जाने के कारण इन दुकानों से वितरित होने वाले खाद्यान्नों के मूल्य बढ़ गए हैं और समूची वितरण प्रणाली इससे प्रभावित हुई है; और

(घ) इस स्थिति में सुधार करने के लिए सरकार क्या उपाय कर रही है ?

नागरिक आपूर्ति और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री कमालुद्दीन अहमद) : (क) से (घ) 1992-93 के केन्द्रीय बजट में खाद्यान्नों पर राज-सहायता के लिए 2500 करोड़ रु. का प्रावधान किया गया है । इसके अतिरिक्त, संपुष्ट सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के लिए अभिज्ञात क्षेत्रों में खाद्यानों के वितरण और गोदामों के निर्माण के लिए अतिरिक्त राजसहायता के रूप में 250 करोड़ रु. की राशि का प्रावधान किया गया है । आवश्यकता होने पर धनराशि में वृद्धि कर दी जाएगी ।

सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के लिए केन्द्रीय निर्गम मूल्यों में हाल में कोई संशोधन नहीं किया गया है । सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली के लिए चावल और गेहूं